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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *March* the 21ſt, 1754.

——*Animum picturâ paſcit inani.* VIRG.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I READILY agree with your correſpondent of laſt week in his concluſion, that books, or more properly, that learning is the food of the Mind; and as what happened to me lately was occaſioned by giving my Mind a meal, I beg leave to relate it to you. You muſt know, ſir, I labour under a misfortune, common to many in this great metropolis, which is, to have a very good appetite and very little to eat. This lays me under the neceſſity of ſpunging upon my friends: my calamity indeed ſits the lighter upon me, as I do not practice the little arts and ſhifts of many fine gentlemen, who drop

drop in as it were by chance at dinner-time; who ſaunter about the town in hopes of meeting with ſome generous maſter of a family; or who in a morning-viſit protract the converſation till it is too late for them to dine any where elſe. No, ſir; I have a mind above ſuch low contrivances, and openly avow my ſpunging without any reſerve or ſhame-facedneſs.

WITH the view of getting a breakfaſt, I waited the other morning on lord Finical, who is remarkable for having a very elegant library. The familiarity of his converſation with me in public places gave me courage to make him the firſt viſit; and as I knew that his time of riſing was about twelve, I was at his door by nine; where, after the faſhion of mumpers, I gave but one humble knock for fear of diſturbing him. After ſome time the door was opened to me by a ſlip-ſhod footman, who aſking my honour's pardon for having made me wait ſo long, ſhewed me into the library. Here I found my lady's woman with a fine damaſk napkin in her hand taking down the books one by one, and, after wiping them as tenderly as if they had been glaſs, putting them in their places again. She very politely hoped I would excuſe her; ſaid ſhe ſhould ſoon have done; that to be ſure the books were in a great diſhabille, and not fit to be ſeen in that pickle: "For you muſt know, ſir," ſaid ſhe, "that this is the largeſt room in the houſe, and "my lady gave a ball here laſt night, well knowing "that my lord would not leave WHITE'S till after the "dancers were gone." This, ſhe deſired me to keep to myſelf. I told her, I thought there was no great harm in making uſe of a room which would otherwiſe be uſeleſs. "True, ſir," ſaid ſhe; "but as my lady "knows that my lord does not *chuſe* it, and as my lady "would not willingly offend my lord, ſhe has ſtrictly "ordered all the ſervants not to blab, and deſired me

"to

" to be up thus early to wipe the books, for fear the " duſt upon them ſhould occaſion a diſcovery: for you " know, ſir, if my lord knows nothing of the matter, " it is juſt the ſame thing as if there had been no dan- " cing at all." As I did not controvert ſo convenient a doctrine, her converſation ended with wiping the laſt book; and after having received an aſſurance from me of keeping ſecret what ſhe had no occaſion to intruſt me with, ſhe very graciouſly diſmiſſed herſelf.

I WAS now left by myſelf, and was going as I thought to ſit down to a moſt delicious repaſt; but I found myſelf in the ſtate of a country booby at a great man's table, who ſits gaping and ſtaring at the richneſs of the plate and elegance of the ſervice while he ſhould eat his dinner. I ſtood aſtoniſhed at the gay proſpect before me: the ſhelves, which at the bottom were deep enough to contain a juſt folio, tapered upwards by degrees, and ended at the dimenſion of a ſmall duodecimo. All the books on the ſame ſhelf were exactly of the ſame ſize, and were only to be diſtinguiſhed by their backs, which were moſt of them gilt and lettered, and diſplayed as great a variety of colours, as is to be ſeen in a bed of tulips: for the bindings of ſome were red, ſome few black, others blue, green, or yellow; and here and there at proper intervals was ſtuck in one in a vellum covering, as white as a curd and lettered black, in order to make a ſtronger contraſt of the colours on each ſide of it.

HITHERTO I ſtood at ſome diſtance to take with more advantage a general view of the beauty of the whole; but curioſity leading me to a cloſer inſpection of each individual, I had the pleaſure to find myſelf ſurrounded by the beſt authors in ancient and modern learning. I took down ſeveral of them by way of taſting, (for as lord Bacon obſerves, " ſome books are to be taſt- " ed, others to be ſwallowed, and ſome few to be chew-

" ed

" ed and digeſted)" and by the ſticking together of the leaves, occaſioned by the marbling and gilding the edges, I found that not one of them had been opened ſince they came out of the hands of the book-binder.

I now fell to with a good appetite, intending to make a full meal; and while I was chewing upon a piece of Tully's philoſophical writings, my lord came in upon me. His looks diſcovered great uneaſineſs, which I attribu ted to the event of his laſt night's diverſion; but, good manners requiring me to prefer his lordſhip's converſation to my own amuſement, I replaced his book, and by the ſudden ſatisfaction in his countenance, I perceived that the cauſe of his perturbation was my holding open the book with a pinch of ſnuff in my fingers. He ſaid he was glad to ſee me, for he ſhould not have known elſe what to have done with himſelf: I returned the compliment by ſaying I thought he could not want entertainment amidſt ſo choice a collection of books. " Yes, " replyed he, the collection is not without elegance; " but I read men only now; for I finiſhed my ſtudies " when I ſat out on my travels. You are not the firſt " who have admired my library; and I am allowed to have " as fine a taſte in books as any man in England." Hereupon he ſhewed me a Paſtor-fido bound in green, decorated with myrtle-leaves: he then took down a volume of Tillotſon in a black binding with the leaves as white as a law book, and gilt on the back with little mitres and croſiers; and laſtly a Cæſar's commentaries cloathed in red and gold, in imitation of the military uniform of Engliſh officers. He reflected with an air of ſatisfaction upon the uſefulneſs of making obſervations in travelling abroad; and acknowledged that he owed the thought to his having ſeen, in a French abbe's ſtudy at Paris, all the Dauphine editions of the claſſics with gold dolphins on the back of them. *Num veſceris iſtâ*

quam

quam laudas, plumâ? was frequently at my tongue's end; but good breeding reſtrained me from taking the liberty of a too familiar expoſtulation.

We now ſat down at the table; and my lord, having ordered the tea-water, begged the favour of me to reach out my hand to the window-ſeat behind me, and give him one of the books, which lay flat one upon another, the backs and leaves alternately. I did ſo; and endeavouring to take the uppermoſt, I found that they all clung together. His lordſhip, ſeeing my ſurpriſe, laughed very heartily, ſaying it was only a tea-cheſt, and that I was not the firſt by many whom he had played the ſame trick upon. On examining it, I found that the upper book opened as a lid, and the hinges and key-hole of the lock were concealed ſo artfully, as they might eaſily eſcape common obſervation. But it was with great concern that I beheld the backs of theſe ſeeming books lettered Pope's works. Poor Pope! with what indignation would he have ſwelled, had he lived to ſee but the mere phantom of his works become the vehicle of grocery! His lordſhip, obſerving my eyes fixed with attention on the lettering, gave me the reaſon of it: "What could I do? ſaid he: the credit of my library "required the preſence of the poet; but where to "place him was the difficulty; for my ſhelves were all "full, long before the laſt publication of him, and "would have loſt much of their beauty by any derange-"ment; ſo to get clear of the *embaras*, I thought it "might be as well to have Mr. Hallet's edition as "Mr. Knapton's." I perfectly agreed with his lordſhip, reſerving to myſelf my meaning as to his own particular. Mr. Caſh the banker being now introduced, after hearing a joke or two upon Mr. Caſh's books, which his lordſhip was pleaſed to call a more valuable library than his own, I left them to their private buſineſs.

And now, Mr. Fitz-Adam, for the ſake of many, who like lord Finical, have a fine taſte in books, and not the

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